



Testimony In Support of HB 6590
“An Act Concerning Certain Protections for Group and Family Child Care Homes”
Submitted to the Housing Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly
Jessica Sager, CEO of All Our Kin
February 7, 2022

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Luxenberg, Ranking Members Senator Sampson and Representative Scott, and distinguished members of the Housing Committee.

My name is Jessica Sager. I am the Co-founder and CEO of All Our Kin. Founded in New Haven, we support more than 600 family child care providers who have the capacity to care for 5,400 children through offices there and in Bridgeport, Stamford/Norwalk and the surrounding communities. Beyond Connecticut’s borders, we work with family child care providers and organizations that support them in 21 states and local communities across the country.

Today you will hear directly from a number of family child care providers. Their stories and the stories of many others we have had the honor of working with over the past two decades describe the problem that HB 6590 proposes to solve. I am here to ask you to support HB 6590 on behalf of them and the families in their communities. While I do so in my professional capacity, this issue resonates with me in a very personal way.

When my daughter Sophia was born, All Our Kin had a very small staff, and I needed to be able to go back to work as quickly as I could. Because I had a wonderful child care provider, I never doubted that my child was loved, that she was happy, or that she was safe. When I had work obligations that required me to drop her off early or pick her up later than usual, my child care provider helped me balance the needs of my family and my job.

Because of this, I could go to work every day, building an organization that would support family child care educators across the state while creating jobs in the communities where we opened up new offices. Every working parent deserves that feeling of security and support. Every working parent needs access to quality care.

Although Connecticut’s economy has made progress recovering from the pandemic, almost 62,000 fewer people are working today than before the pandemic. Nationwide, 100% of those who left jobs during the pandemic were women – not because they don’t want to work, but because they can’t work without

child care. If you have young children or grandchildren, or friends and co-workers with children, if you read the newspapers or listen to our state's largest employers, you know the child care shortage undergirds our state's workforce crisis.

This increases women's financial insecurity in the short- and long-term. When women leave the workforce it indelibly alters their employment trajectories. They don't receive promotions, raises, and accrue savings at the same pace as men.

This results in a lifetime wage gap between all Connecticut women and men of about \$434,000 a year. But for Black women, the lifetime wage gap increases to more than \$1.3 million, and among Latinas it is more than \$1.5 million dollars. The consequences to women and families can be tragic. The consequences for the state are no less severe: they add up to millions of dollars of lost revenue and greater public expenditures to help meet basic needs, including food, housing and health care.

Before the pandemic, 44% of the state's residents lived in a child care desert, where there is less than one licensed child care slot for three or more children. The child care shortage is most pronounced in rural and urban areas and among families with infants and toddlers. Families often prefer to enroll infants and toddlers in home-based child care. As you will see in Commissioner Bye's written testimony, OEC envisions family child care providers meeting up to half of the unmet need for infant-toddler slots. But barriers to zoning are stifling the family child care supply.

I hope you will enable family child care providers to provide the options for working women that I benefited from as a young mother. I hope you will enable providers to continue to support their own families as small business owners without undue zoning restrictions that limit their ability to run successful businesses. Your vote for HB 6590 is a vote in favor of working families, family child care providers, and the economic vitality of our communities. I urge you to support this important bill.